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TAGS: [IZ](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: HASHIMI CONFIDENT ABOUT SOLUTION FOR
DE-BA'ATHIFICATION CRISIS

Classified By: Political Counselor Yuri Kim for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1.(C) SUMMARY: Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi told the Ambassador January 19 that he was optimistic that Iraqi leaders could forge a consensus agreement to deal with the crisis created by the Accountability and Justice Commission's (AJC's) de-Ba'athification activities. Hashimi said President Talabani agreed with a proposal for the Presidency Council to convene at the soonest date after VP Adil Abd al-Mahdi's return from Tehran and issue a statement declaring that the current AJC did not have the statutory authority to act. As of January 20, Hashimi's office was still trying to reach Abd al-Mahdi to arrange the meeting. Hashimi voiced appreciation for the Ambassador's role in Iraq and asked him to urge PM Maliki to join the Presidency Council in a meeting or at least to publicly endorse their statement. END SUMMARY.

2.(C) In a January 19 meeting with Ambassador, VP Tariq al-Hashimi was optimistic that Iraqi leaders could forge a consensus agreement to solve the de-Ba'athification crisis. Hashimi said that President Talabani supported convening the Presidency Council at the soonest date to issue a statement condemning the de-Ba'athification activities of Ahmed Chalabi and Ali al-Lami on behalf of the Accountability and Justice Commission, and stating that the AJC as currently constituted did not have the legal authority to be taking any actions. (NOTE: Hashimi planned to convene the meeting upon VP Adil Abd al-Mahdi's return from Tehran, but as of January 20 Hashimi's office told us they were unable to reach VP Mahdi. END NOTE.) Ambassador and Hashimi agreed that Talabani had initially adopted a more hands-off approach to the de-Ba'athification crisis but that a call from VP Biden and the explosion of 500 additional names onto the de-Ba'athification list (following the initial disqualification of Saleh al-Mutlaq) had convinced Talabani to oppose the activities of the present Accountability and Justice Commission. Hashimi said VP Adil Abd al-Mahdi was still in Tehran but would return on January 20. Hashimi stressed the need for a contingency plan, should the Presidency Council initiative fail.

3.(C) Ambassador told Hashimi he would meet with PM Maliki later on January 19. Hashimi asked Ambassador to urge PM Maliki to support the Presidency Council meeting and statement. Hashimi hoped Maliki would meet with the members of the Presidency Council, transforming the meeting into what Hashimi termed "an executive session of the presidency." "If we hold such a meeting and issue a communique the problem might be solved," Hashimi said.

4.(C) Hashimi noted Maliki's pre-election concerns as well as those of the other key parties and coalitions. "Da'wa is watching ISCI very closely" and ISCI was doing likewise, Hashimi said. Nevertheless, he believed that a consensus agreement, a Presidency Council plus PM, or "Three Plus One" deal (the president, two vice presidents, plus the PM), could empower Iraqi leaders to face down Chalabi and Lami while

allowing PM Maliki to avoid charges of being "soft" on Ba'athists.

5.(C) Hashimi distanced himself from Saleh al-Mutlaq. Hashimi noted that from the outset, he had been wary of joining the "Iraqiyya" political coalition that included Mutlaq and Dhafer al-Ani because he worried that their "nonsense talk" would later put him in a difficult position. Hashimi called Mutlaq "undisciplined" and "out-of-control" and said he told Mutlaq to deal with the problems he created and said he told Mutlaq to deal with the problems he created for himself and that "If you want to create a Ba'athist Iraq I,m not part of that. I'm defending my country; I'm dreaming of a new Iraq."

6.(C) Hashimi lamented that the de-Ba'athification crisis caused by the AJC had been long in the making. He handed the Ambassador a copy of a 2008 letter from the Presidency Council to the parliament stressing that with the passage of the 2008 Accountability and Justice law, the previous de-Ba'athification commission, with commission chair Ahmed Chalabi and executive director Ali al-Lami, no longer had any legal authority to act. Hashimi told Ambassador that the Presidency Council had not acted sooner to clamp down on Chalabi because "between you and me, we exercise a low profile."

7.(C) At the end of the meeting, Krikor Der-Hagopian, foreign relations advisor to Hashimi, said there were unconfirmed reports that PM Maliki was planning to issue a statement that all de-Ba'athification decisions of Chalabi and Lami's Accountability and Justice Commission were illegitimate. As of January 20, that remained a rumor.
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